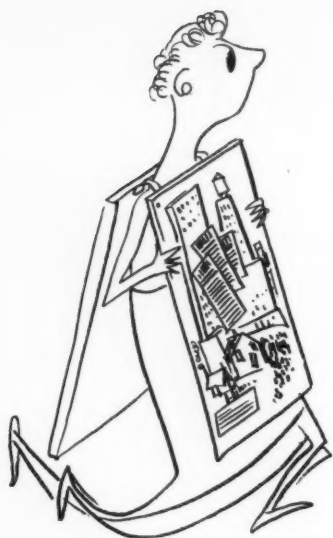




THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART BULLETIN, NOVEMBER 1944, VOL. XII, NO. 2



THE MUSEUM GOES ABROAD

An outstanding event of the year for Londoners interested in postwar reconstruction—and that would include a sizable portion of the population—was the exhibition *U. S. Housing in War and Peace*, shown there from July 19th to August 26th and now being circulated about England.

At the request of the Council of the Royal Institute of British Architects, the exhibition was prepared by the Museum of Modern Art through its department of circulating exhibitions. The Office of War Information, Overseas Division, which had agreed to sponsor and put on the exhibition in London, collated and shipped the material for assembly abroad. Duplicates of the show were prepared by OWI for Australia and South Africa, and a copy of the section on prefabrication and building techniques was arranged for Russia.

Directed and designed by Mary Cooke, with Catherine Bauer as consultant, the exhibition surveyed the accomplishments and the shortcomings of our housing program before and during the war. An analysis of building techniques, empha-

sizing the advances toward rationalized construction which were made under the pressure of wartime production, was prepared by the Standards Section of the National Housing Agency, directed by Vernon DeMars. The Acting Curator of Architecture served as advisor to those assembling the material.

The exhibition, prepared as a traveling show, was composed of panels with running text, dramatic illustrations and diagrams. It was a lively show, which was greeted in London by an interested international audience and an enthusiastic British press. (Emay Twining, formerly a member of the Museum's staff of Circulating Exhibitions, and now head of the exhibitions unit of OWI in London, directed the presentation of the exhibition there in collaboration with the Royal Institute of British Architects.) Quoting the *London Observer*: "They are now concentrating on dwellings which are homes. They realize that the fighting men on their return, having had enough of communal life in the Services, will value privacy

Cover: Globetrotter, Print #5 from *FIGURINEN* by El Lissitzky.

above all else. The Americans—as we must—are fighting the battle for adequate living space. The opportunity to study these points is provided by this excellently-staged exhibition of American housing plans before and during the war." Of particular interest to the profession, the exhibition enjoyed wide publicity in the trade journals—from *The Plumbing Trade Journal* to *The Irish Builder and Engineer*. The entire August issue of *The Architectural Review* was devoted to the exhibition.

One of the most interesting parts of the show presented "a few things we have learned for peacetime housing": a revised and expanded version of this section will be assembled by the Department of Circulating Exhibitions for tour in the U. S. and will be shown to New Yorkers at the Museum in February, 1945.



U. S. Ambassador John G. Winant with Emay Twining and Victor Weybright of the OWI inspect the London exhibition of "U. S. Housing in War and Peace."

Because exhibitions of architecture reveal more of our American way-of-life than perhaps any other type of show, except the straight propaganda presentation through photographs of people, films, etc., they have been requested from the Museum by institutions abroad more than any other type of material. In celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the Swedish American Society in Stockholm and its sister organization, the American Scandinavian Foundation in New York, the Museum was invited to participate in an exhibition of American architecture for Sweden.

Swedish architects suggested that the Museum emphasize contemporary American architecture, with special stress on new building methods, the use of new materials, and also include descriptions of public and private housing and town planning.

The exhibition titled *America Builds* (*Amerika Bygger*) was opened on June 14th, according to schedule, by the Crown Prince and Crown Princess of Sweden and other members of the Royal Family to an audience which overflowed the main exhibition hall of the Museum. Gotthard Johansson, leading Swedish art critic said, "It was the best architectural exhibition I have ever seen." OWI reports that the opening literally crowded the war news to one side on front pages, and not a single unfavorable word appeared in the enthusiastic comments. The popular radio program "Dagens Echo" broke every precedent by devoting a great deal of time to *America Builds*. (The only sour note, so far as the Museum is concerned, was an advertisement by a Swedish department store for "cozy-American inspiration,"—an overstuffed chair of the flowered chintz school.)

The event was significant not only as the first architectural exhibition to be held at the National Museum, but its first American exhibition of any kind. The director of the Museum, Erik Wettersgren, remarked in his opening address,

"Nothing could be more natural than to provide a place for architecture, the mother of the arts, in the very home of art: and America we would welcome as friend and kinsman, closer to our hearts than many other countries nearer to us geographically, the home of many hundreds of thousands of Swedish forefathers.

"It is significant that America's first important artistic manifestation should be in the form of an introduction to the art of building in that country. In that field, America, with its tremendous efficiency, has let blocks of buildings storm the sky itself; but at the same time, with its consideration for the well-being of the individual, it has also created homes permeated with peace and comfort."

With only two months to prepare the exhibition for the scheduled opening, the departments of architecture and circulating exhibitions, already busy with the Museum's 15th Anniversary show, the book *BUILT IN USA*, and the housing exhibition for England, decided that the only—and far from ideal—way to meet the unprece-

dent time limit was to concoct the exhibition as much as possible from material at hand. With more time, a broader and more analytical discussion could have been prepared.

Janet Henrich O'Connell, Supervisor of Circulating Exhibitions, was appointed to assemble and coordinate the four sections of the exhibition:

1. *Pioneers of Modern Architecture*: Richardson, Sullivan and Wright.
2. *Outstanding Buildings of the Past Ten Years*, based on *Built in USA* which was under way in the Department of Architecture. (The OWI, for reasons of its own, added some buildings to this section which were not in total agreement with the Museum's choice.)
3. *U. S. Housing in War and Peace*. An abbreviated version of the major show for London.
4. *Planning in the U. S. A.* assembled in collaboration with the TVA and with G. Holmes Perkins of the National Housing Agency.



Crown Princess Louise, Prince Eugen, Anders Beckman, The Crown Prince Gustaf Adolf, and the American Press Attaché Karl Jensen at the opening of "America Builds."



The Swedish and American flags wave outside the National Museum in Stockholm during the ten-week run of "Amerika Bygger."

In addition to these sections, which included some 400 photographs, the OWI included material on American historical buildings, a collection of distinguished contemporary interiors and an ample selection of color slides and transparencies of American painting and sculpture.

A series of four lectures were given in connection with the exhibition:

Karl E. Jensen: (Chief of the Stockholm Outpost of OWI): "Frank Lloyd Wright and Organic Architecture."

Alvar Aalto: (whose one-man architecture and furniture show the Museum had held and circulated in 1939-1941) "Town Planning and Impressions of American Contemporary Building."

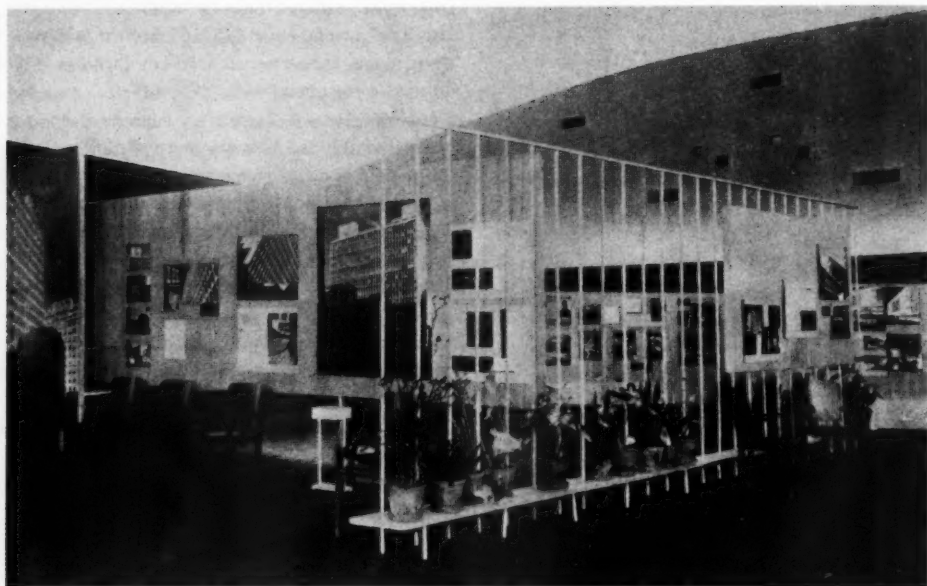
Anders Tengbom: "Pioneer in American Architecture—Louis Sullivan."

Frederic Prokosch: (Staff member of the OWI Stockholm Outpost): "New Directions in American Painting."

The attendance figures far exceeded expectations, running over 7,000 in the first two weeks when this report was received. Swedish critics found it remarkable that this "official" American exhibition was so exclusively modern, as modern architecture had hitherto met with little encouragement in official circles in America. (The situation is, of course, very different in Sweden, where good contemporary design is an accepted fact in every field, particularly in architecture. The Museum's circulating exhibition *Stockholm Builds* has brought this to the attention of many Americans and Canadians.) Swedish critics observed also that the current of interest in architectural matters, which had formerly run almost exclusively from East to West across the Atlantic, now showed signs of running in the opposite direction—with Europe looking to America for new impulses.

In addition to these two major exhibitions, numerous others have been sent abroad during the past two years. The *Road to Victory* was the first to be assembled for foreign shipment, one OWI-sponsored edition going to England, two others, sponsored by the C.I.A.A., to Uruguay and Columbia.

Brazil Builds has been enormously popular here and abroad. A small version was made for circulation to American schools and colleges not equipped to show the original large exhibition. A special edition was prepared for showing in Brazil and served to inaugurate the opening of the Brazilian Ministry of Education and Health in Rio. It was installed by Oscar Niemeyer, one of the architects of the building, and later went to Sao Paulo and other cities. The American edition of this show was sent to Mexico City during the summer of 1943 and handsomely installed there by John McAndrew, former curator of the Museum's Department of Architecture. At the request of the Brazilian Embassy, a special edition was prepared for showing in London.



The "Brazil Builds" Exhibition installed in the auditorium of the Ministry of Education and Health in Rio de Janeiro.

The first architectural exhibition to be prepared by the Museum for the OWI was a section on American Architecture for a large show which included American applied arts, industrial art, photography, graphic art, and the movies. This was assembled by the department of architecture under Mrs. Mock's direction in the record time of three weeks. Shown first at the Grand Palace of the Royal Agricultural Society in Cairo, the exhibition is now being circulated about the Middle East.

All of the above mentioned exhibitions were especially prepared for overseas distribution, with the exception of the *Brazil Builds* show which went to Mexico. Other traveling exhibitions prepared for the U.S.A. which have been sent to other countries are:

United Hemisphere Posters—at the Ministry of

Education, Havana, Cuba: October 15—November 15, 1943

100 Years of Portrait Photography—at the Biblioteca Benjamin Franklin, Mexico City: June 15—July 15, 1944

Silk Screen Prints—at the Biblioteca Benjamin Franklin, Mexico City: August 11—26, 1944

Previous announcement has been made in the *Museum Bulletin* of the many exhibitions sent to Canada and the project of circulating our shows throughout Eastern Canada under the sponsorship of the Art Gallery of Toronto and the National Gallery of Art in Ottawa. Plans are now under way to send additional exhibitions to South America, Australia, Algiers and France and discussions have been carried on with the Czechoslovakian Ministry regarding possible exchange shows for the post V-Day period.

JACQUES LIPCHITZ'S STRUGGLE

In a large and bare studio on Madison Square in New York one of the more ambitious sculptures of our time has slowly been achieved. It has progressed in silence and loneliness, in a solitude filled with hope, sometimes with bitter anger, always with determination and courage. An artist in exile has searched here for an expression of his "will for freedom against the sinister forces of evil." It was not his grief over France's fall that made Jacques Lipchitz want to represent the struggle of Prometheus with the vulture; the story of this sculpture goes back much farther. It reflects the ordeals of an artist of our days, the answer of those who create to those who destroy, but also the determination of a man to realize a project which for years had ripened in his mind, changing its shape and scope as the world around him changed.

For a long time Lipchitz had wanted to model Prometheus, the fighter against darkness. But the political situation made him feel, more than ten years ago, that his hero, before he could come to the aid of stricken mankind, had first to free himself from his chains. His earliest sketches, made in 1933, show Prometheus triumphant, his chains broken, the vulture vanquished, but the artist abandoned them in favor of a project representing the terrible fight in which the animal and its antagonist measure their superhuman forces.

When the sculptor was asked in 1936 to participate in the decoration of the Palace of Discovery and Invention which was to be an important feature of the 1937 Paris World's Fair, he thought immediately of this project and feverishly set to work, creating a young and robust Prometheus, coifed with a Phrygian bonnet, choking the frightful bird with his right hand,

while his left assuaged the wounds inflicted by the carrion claws. But the fist closed around the vulture's neck was a victorious one and heavy arms forced the beast down to the ground; the evil was about to be subdued.

The sculpture, rapidly executed and cast in plaster, crowned one of the entrances of the *Grand Palais*, more than 80 feet above the ground, the artist taking into account the foreshortenings and distortions which a presentation from such a distance unavoidably produces. Some time after the closing of the Fair, the statue was dismantled and its pieces were carried to the National warehouse, where they probably still are if they have not completely deteriorated.

Later, in 1939, Lipchitz made a new model which was to be shown at the Brummer Gallery, together with some earlier models and many sketches for the *Prometheus*, thus illustrating Lipchitz's methods of work. This exhibition was to show how an idea takes form in his mind and is put on paper before he touches his clay. Preparatory drawings have for him the function of specifying the various problems: the balancing of masses, the control of the effects of volume as it is created by light, and the penetration of details that have appeared more or less vaguely before his inner eye. But the artist does not follow faithfully these drawings when he begins to work in three dimensions; constant changes and improvements take place while he works in clay and he even executes small scale models to study his subject further.

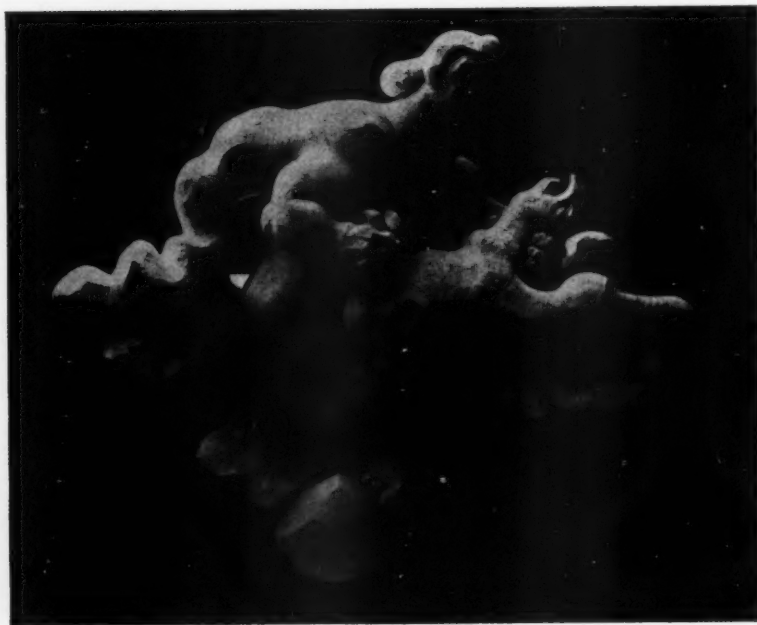
However, the war prevented the bronzes, plastercasts and drawings from crossing the Atlantic for the New York show. *Prometheus* had to remain in France, temporarily vanquished by a present-day vulture, but the artist himself took

refuge in the United States. The events had deeply affected his life, yet he refused to believe that the forces of darkness were to win. According to his own words he had, on his arrival here, "the firm conviction that his *Prometheus* would live again." And he was to live!

When the Brazilian Government* asked Lipchitz for a sculpture to decorate the immense wall of its Ministry of Education, the artist once again found an opportunity to cast his vision of Prometheus' struggle into solid forms. It is this work on which he has concentrated, a plasteline model seven feet high, which has been cast in plaster and is on its way to Brazil where, under the artist's supervision, it will be enlarged to twenty feet before it is molded in bronze. Fixed high on a grayish-white granite wall under a brilliant sun, the work has been conceived especially for its particular setting.

That his *Prometheus* was to adorn the Ministry of Education of one of the more advanced coun-

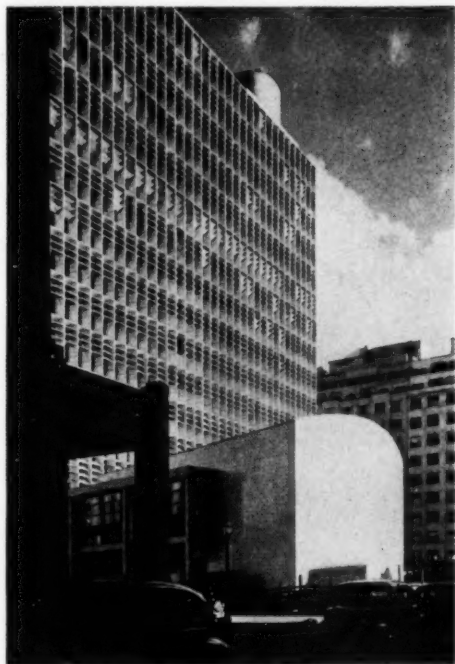
tries in the American hemisphere pleased Lipchitz immeasurably. Also, he hoped that the project would help to revive one of the fundamental functions of sculpture: to form a unity with monumental architecture. It was the young and talented Brazilian architect himself, Oscar Niemeyer, who believed that the huge curved wall of the auditorium needed a sculpture not as an ornament but as part of its organized mass. An identical conception inspired Lipchitz when he accepted the assignment, for he saw there not only the final destination of *Prometheus* but also the possibility to tackle many problems of vital interest: the living mass of his work forcing the wall out of its neutrality, the decoration of the building conceived as a decisive enrichment, not to speak of the technical problem of mounting. It is not surprising, therefore, that Lipchitz has left nothing to hazard, that each volume, each profile, each opposition of shadow and lightness of *Prometheus* has been carefully calculated.



Left: Plaster cast of the completed *Prometheus*.

Above right: Small scale model of the wall with statue attached.

Below right: The auditorium wall of the Ministry.



Among his sculptures Jacques Lipchitz distinguishes two kinds of work. There are those which grow almost naturally between his fingers, without abundant preconception, just as some deep urge directs his hands; and those which are the fruit of long meditation. *Prometheus* is such a work. After all the years of research and thought, this sculpture bears the stamp of the artist's will down to the last detail. His mind is as responsible for it as his eyes and hands, if not even more than they. Standing before his work he explains it with neither pride nor modesty but with the calm assurance of a man who knows that he has achieved what he wanted to do, as he wanted it, and who is confident of the result.

Strangely enough, the new *Prometheus* no longer struggles with the vulture. The artist, in his own terms, has represented not the bitter fight between the man and the beast, but a mystical dance; the vulture and its antagonist seem to have accomplished a sacred rite. Their members are united in an harmonious flight high above the ground, the two supernatural creatures no longer oppose their forces. *Prometheus* has won, the vulture is dominated and has lost its aggressiveness; the struggle is ended, the chains have fallen, a new era is about to begin. And so at the dawn of this era *Prometheus* triumphs over the vulture under the glistening sun of Brazil.

Can it be chance that Jacques Lipchitz put the last touches on his *Prometheus* in Madison Square while the Allies landed in Normandy and the liberation of France began?

John Rewald

*The Museum's (unofficial) interest in the Lipchitz sculpture began in June 1942 when Philip Goodwin (in Rio gathering material for *Brazil Builds*) and Lincoln Kirstein took part in a conference concerning proposals for the auditorium wall. Later, Mr. Goodwin commissioned a plaster sketch for a model to be included in the Museum exhibition of *Brazil Builds* in January 1943, and he has materially aided and advised the sculptor on many subsequent occasions.

Also, nine studies by Lipchitz for *Prometheus* were included in the *Modern Drawings* exhibition last spring.

SOVIET CHILDREN'S ART

From fabled Samarkand and the far away province of Uzbekistan—the Florida of the Soviet Union—come pictures which mirror the life and interests of the child artist, aged six to fifteen, in a country fighting for its existence in total war. These watercolors and drawings were shown for the first time in this country from September 20 through November 19 in the Young People's Gallery of the Museum in collaboration with the National Council of American-Soviet Friendship, Inc. Although most of the pictures comprising the exhibition were made in the Uzbek region, the young artists also come from other parts of the Soviet Union.

The eight sections of the exhibition express graphically the activities, mental and physical, which engage the thoughts and energies of these children: *We Love our Country*, *The Red Army Defends Us*, *We Work on a Collective Farm*, *Uzbek Fairy Tale*, *We Will Help the Front*, *We Care for the Wounded*, *We Build*, *We Will be Heroes*.

The pictures show tanks being unloaded from trains that are barely larger than the tanks themselves; an outdoor cinema; the heads of children with farm implements just showing above the enormous wheels of an Uzbek bullock cart; flowers taken to soldiers in a hospital; men at work on a canal; and a very graphic presentation of *Fighting on the Black Sea* by a Jewish boy of nine evacuated from Moscow. This little boy, Yulik Labas, is passionately absorbed in the war; no other themes are portrayed in his work. From early morning he waits for the communiques of the Soviet Information Bureau. As soon as they are received, he starts to illustrate them. One eight-year-old girl, Masha Elkonina, has turned for inspiration to an Uzbek fairy tale and portrays the legendary hero, Farkhad, vanquishing a lion, and looking with love on Queen Shirin who gallops romantically over a tulip-covered valley.

Many of the Uzbek children's pictures show, both in their rich colors and filigree-like designs, a kinship with Persian art. Yet in these pictures the exotic atmosphere of the East is combined with many of the practical aspects and objects of the Western world such as an interior with a definitely Western sewing machine; a locomotive drawing loaded cars beyond a delicately patterned orchard with boys and girls picking fruit; a parade of children laden with the booty of a successful scrap drive.

A nationwide tour of the exhibition has been arranged by the Department of Circulating Exhibitions following the showing in New York. Its first stop will be Cornell University, and other showings are scheduled at Munson Williams Proctor Institute, Utica; Art Institute of Zanesville, Ohio; and Hackley Art Gallery, Muskegon, Mich.



Gathering the Apples.

JACOB LAWRENCE

A Negro's contribution in terms of art to an understanding of this country's racial problem was presented by the Museum in October with the exhibition of *Paintings by Jacob Lawrence*. Eight new paintings made since the artist has been in service with the United States Coast Guard were shown with his *Migration of the Negro* series of 60 paintings depicting the movement of the Negro population Northward since World War I.

Coast Guardsman Lawrence paints facts, not propaganda. In spite of the stark simplification of forms and bold contrast of primary colors that give so much strength to his work, his pictorial statements are quiet, even-tempered, non-inflammatory. His pictures do not mount a soap box or preach a sermon. Yet almost imperceptibly his Coast Guard paintings suggest the gradual beginnings of a solution to the problem so movingly portrayed in the *Migration* series.

The earlier series, painted in 1940-41 on a grant from the Rosenwald Foundation, depict the poverty-stricken, fear-ridden existence of many Negroes in the South; their hopeful migration to the labor-starved markets of the North in World War I; and the conditions they met there—disillusionment because of segregated, overcrowded districts, fear because of occasional race riots, yet on the whole a step forward because they could exercise their right to the ballot and their children's right to an education.

Half of the sixty paintings in the *Migration* series are owned by the Phillips Memorial Gallery and half by the Museum of Modern Art (gift of Mrs. David M. Levy) which has been circulating the entire series to museums, art galleries and colleges throughout the country.

The *Migration* pictures were shown in May 1943 at the Portland (Oregon) Art Museum at a time when there were severe racial difficulties in the Kaiser shipyards. With the aid of a prominent



Jacob Lawrence with one of his Coast Guard paintings.

Negro organization, the Portland Museum arranged a forum for discussion of the immediate problems of World War II against the background of pictures which so understandingly portrayed the same problems during World War I. The forum produced good results.

Jacob Lawrence, born September 7, 1917 in Atlantic City, joined the United States Coast Guard in October 1943. He went in as a Steward's Mate but through the aid and encouragement of the Captain of the ship, Lt. Commander Carlton Skinner, found time to do some painting. While in the Service he has turned out seventeen paintings, all of Coast Guard activities and all in his favorite medium, gouache. Recently transferred to the Public Relations Branch of the Service, Lawrence has been given the rating of Specialist Third Class, and will be able to devote his time to painting.

MUSEUM NOTES

EXHIBITIONS

Soviet Children's Art: Sept. 19–Nov. 19, Young People's Gallery. *see page 10*

American Battle Painting 1776–1918: Sept. 26–Nov. 12. Planned in collaboration with the National Gallery of Art the exhibition reveals the continuing American tradition, from the Revolution through World War I, of the use of artists to record war. The exhibition was assembled by Pvt. Lincoln Kirstein for the Museum's Armed Services Program and by Mrs. Margaret D. Garrett for the National Gallery in Washington. A catalog with text by Lincoln Kirstein has been prepared jointly and is available at the front desk. 60 pages; 43 plates (2 in full color); paper 75 cents.

Jacob Lawrence: Oct. 10–Nov. 5. *see page 11*

Feininger-Hartley: Oct. 24–Jan. 14. A retrospective exhibition of paintings and drawings by Lyonel Feininger and Marsden Hartley, American artists. The Feininger exhibition was directed by Dorothy C. Miller; the Hartley by Hudson D. Walker. *see publications announcement.*

Are Clothes Modern?: Nov. 28–March 4. In a period of economic crisis and shifting values, this exhibition offers a fundamentally fresh approach to the problems of apparel. Although no specific reforms are offered, it presents so original an analysis of the function of clothes that it may well open the way to intelligent change, and foster some realization of the fact that certain conventions, traditionally accepted as inseparable from dress and therefore never questioned, are in fact useless, irrational, and harmful. This challenging viewpoint is graphically presented by photographs, charts, drawings, etc. with the aim of arousing latent interest in dress reform comparable with that already accomplished by the modern analysis of function in the field of architecture and industrial design. Conceived, directed and installed by Bernard Rudofsky.

PUBLICATIONS

Feininger-Hartley: Essays by Alois J. Schardt, Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Monroe Wheeler. Two American painters whose work has been appreciated only recently in this country, are well documented here in another of the Museum's surveys of

noted contemporary artists. The styles of these artists, considering the similarity of their influence, provide an interesting contrast.

Lyonel Feininger is one of the most distinguished of the older generation of American artists. Despite his devotion to cubist forms, he has always revealed a highly poetic preoccupation in his painting. His work is highly individual and his reputation, international in scope, continues to grow. Marsden Hartley's art, presented in broad and inclusive retrospect, is an exciting commentary on the evolution of an American artist under the impact of various 20th century movements—abstraction, expressionism, realism, etc. 96 pages; 89 plates (2 in color); cloth; \$2.50.

New Color Reproduction: *Manchester Valley* by Joseph Pickett, colotype, 22 x 30" on format 28 x 34 3/4"; sale price \$8, members receiving a 25% discount.

APPOINTMENTS

The Chairman of the Board of Trustees announces that Alfred H. Barr, Jr., has accepted appointment to the Chair of Modern Painting and Sculpture which was created at the Board meeting on May 11, 1944. Mr. Barr's duties will be to carry on research and publication in modern painting and sculpture with particular reference to the Museum's Collection. He will have no curatorial responsibilities such as acquisition and care but beginning with the summer of 1945 he will be in charge of exhibiting the collection of Painting and Sculpture. He will be available also for consultation and advice.

Mrs. Susanne Wasson-Tucker has been appointed Acting Curator of the Department of Industrial Design.

CHRISTMAS MEMBERSHIPS

Members are reminded of the suitability of giving a membership in the Museum to family and friends as a Christmas gift. Last year more than 500 memberships were given and new memberships received thus far indicate that an even greater number will be made this year. Christmas membership gifts include a complimentary copy of a new color reproduction: *Rue de Crimée, Paris*, by Maurice Utrillo. (22 x 28" unframed, regular price \$5.50. This picture will not be available for public sale until January.) Membership dues are deductible in computing Income Tax. Order forms have already been sent to Members and should be returned by December 15th at the latest.

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART,

11 WEST 53 STREET, NEW YORK 19

